



Beacon Hill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124908
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281834
Inspection dates 21 February 2006 to 22 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Alan Lemon LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Stone Lodge Lane West
School category	Community		IP2 9HW
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473601175
Number on roll	160	Fax number	01473688882
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Albert Collins
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr. David Stewart

Age group 5 to 16	Inspection dates 21 February 2006 - 22 February 2006	Inspection number 281834
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has 159 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. A variety of additional problems complicate many pupils' learning such as emotional and behavioural difficulties or speech and communication problems. Their attainment on entry is very low. Pupils' come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Nearly one third are eligible for free school meals and most are White British. The school is a member of the government's Leading Edge Partnership and provides a service, the outreach service, throughout the county supporting autistic pupils in other schools. Its awards are Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Silver and Activemark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the school is good and it provides good value for money. The school's own evaluation is that its effectiveness is outstanding and important aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The outreach service is of the highest quality and is greatly appreciated by the many schools that have exceptional support in meeting the needs of their autistic pupils. The care, support and guidance for pupils are exemplary and this underpins pupils' excellent personal development. Parents hold the school in the highest esteem for its success in helping their children prepare for the future. The work and activities contained in the curriculum are an outstanding response to the range and complexity of pupils learning difficulties and disabilities. This ensures every pupil has the fullest access to opportunities to learn and for personal development. The significant elements of teaching and learning, leadership and management and pupils' achievement are good. While each of these elements has some outstanding features, the overall effect of teaching, and that of leadership and management, on pupils' achievement results in a picture that is not as outstanding as is thought by the school. Subject leadership is not yet at the stage to be consistently strong and limited analysis of pupils' performance is carried out. Both restrict how full an understanding there is of the effectiveness of the school's work, which impacts on the sharpness of focus when deciding and taking actions for improvement. The school already appreciates this point and has made it a priority. Therefore, it does not alter the fact that the capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour with which information on the schools' work and pupils' performance is analysed by leaders in order to guide school improvement and further raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good throughout the school although in the case of some individual pupils and in some subjects it is exemplary. No compelling evidence is found to say, as the school does, that pupils' achievement is outstanding, overall. Teaching throughout the school is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress. There is no significant variation in achievement among different groups of pupils as the range of their needs is met so effectively. Pupils' achievement benefits enormously from the provision of excellent learning opportunities and the outstanding care, support and guidance they are given. Pupils all develop a high level of confidence and the motivation to do well. They are helped by the assessments of their progress, which are used to maintain the challenge of work in lessons and in pupils' individual targets. However, limited analysis of pupils' progress means these strengths, although many are of the highest quality, lose their overall ability to raise achievement to the highest level. Despite its success, the school is not looking in sufficient depth to discover where and

why pupils achieve as well as they do. The development of pupils' literacy skills is outstanding as a result of the expert support for reading and writing. The results of Year 10 and 11 pupils in Entry Level Certificate (ELC) courses in food technology and design technology also show outstanding achievements. All pupils are entered for both courses and most achieve higher grade passes. All pupils are entered for science and information and communication technology and achieve good results. In English, mathematics and art, results in ELC courses are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They are extremely enthusiastic and hardworking. Most pupils have good attendance, very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. They have very good relationships with one another and with staff. Pupils are safe in school and are confident in dealing with any worries. Most pupils understand the need to eat healthy foods and to keep fit with regular exercise. There is a good take up of lunchtime sports clubs. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They willingly follow school rules and contribute to making their classroom rules. Many pupils perform responsible tasks around the school such as helping clear up after lunch or running the 'Fair Trade' tuck shop. They understand about protecting the environment through helping with local recycling projects. Pupils enjoy helping others through charity fund raising events. They provide concerts to the elderly and take part in competitions such as the gardening project for the Ipswich in Bloom Award. Pupils have an excellent preparation for leaving school and for their future economic well-being. Their progress in literacy, numeracy and life skills places them very well to cope with the demands of adulthood. They undertake successful work experience placements and attend college courses. Pupils manage the transition to college very well when it is time to leave.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A significant number of lessons are outstanding in how they support all pupils' learning. In most lessons this is the result of teachers combining good subject knowledge and careful lesson planning. As teachers know pupils' individual needs extremely well they plan precisely to match work to each pupil. Teachers work in close consultation with parents to better understand the needs of pupils, for example through the use of home school books. Parents rate these highly as a regular means of communication. Homework is used effectively to promote independent learning. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn in the lesson and this engages them very purposefully. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and their lesson activities are successful in captivating pupils' interest. When teaching is outstanding, there is a buzz of concentrated work throughout the lesson.

There are high expectations and very effective use is made of praise and encouragement for rewarding pupils' progress and effort. Teachers and their assistants manage the often very challenging behaviours of some pupils extremely well. Staff work very well together and a strong feature in many lessons is the effective use of teaching assistants to support learning. In the very few less effective lessons teaching does not engage pupils in learning as well as is the case in most lessons. There is also less use of assessment in planning and guiding learning. Before these lessons end the opportunity for pupils to reflect on what they have learned is not productive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. A wide range of relevant activities is provided that meets the diverse learning needs of pupils and these are enriched very well with additional activities reflecting pupils' interests. The opportunities to gain accreditation are good. There is an extensive range of practical educational learning opportunities in the form of visits to places of cultural, social and historical interest and for residential trips. There are a good number of well attended lunch-time clubs. Staff have been very skilful at tailoring the curriculum to be relevant to the range of pupils. The curriculum for pupils with autism or challenging behaviours is especially good. A recent innovation is the provision of very good learning opportunities supporting pupils' emotional development. Literacy, and in particular literacy support, provides outstanding opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading and writing. The promotion of communication skills lags slightly behind as a consequence of a long gap in the provision of speech therapy services, which has recently been filled. Numeracy skills are promoted well. A very good personal, social, and health education programme is effective in raising pupils' awareness and understanding of keeping safe and being healthy. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 this is extended in the Life Skills Programme which is highly successful in preparing them for further education and the workplace. It includes careers information and opportunities for work-related activities; sporting and adventurous activities. There are good links with other schools and local colleges extending learning opportunities and good use is made of the local and wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. The particular needs of pupils in public care are well addressed. Staff are exceptionally committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all pupils. Procedures for child protection are securely in place. Staff receive training when they join the school and regular updates thereafter. Risk assessments are carefully undertaken and these have a sharp focus in relation to pupils who are the most complex and challenging. There are exceptionally well developed procedures to support those pupils with challenging behaviour. All pupils are familiar with their targets and these are regularly reviewed. The school has a very close partnership with a wide range of professional services that support pupils

and their parents. Parents have detailed information on their child's progress and much is done to enable parents to be closely involved in the education and welfare of their child.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Overall, leadership and management are good. They are outstanding in providing the very successful outreach service. This has led to the school's part in the government's Leading Edge Partnership, putting it at the forefront of new roles for special schools. The school demonstrates an excellent capacity to improve in this significant aspect of its work. There is an exceptionally effective team behind the success of the outreach service. The headteacher is inspirational and has been highly competent in managing this exemplary achievement. Within school, the effect of leadership and management varies between outstanding and satisfactory. They are highly effective in promoting pupils' personal development and their care, guidance and support. The same can be said of the curriculum with the result all pupils have excellent learning opportunities. In other aspects of the school's work they are not as effective in achieving the highest quality. Subject leadership is mixed. Several subject leaders have come to their posts quite recently and are still working to establish a clear direction. The sense made by subject leaders and senior staff of pupils' performance is restricted, until the means they are developing for analysing pupils' performance is embedded. This takes away from the rigour of monitoring and evaluation, overall. The school has a broad grasp, but not a sufficiently detailed overview, of pupils' achievement. Enough takes place on a day-to-day basis to sustain good achievement but not enough to drive standards as high as the school thinks they are. As a result, the large picture of the school's effectiveness is not as clear as it could be. However, weighing all of the school's strengths and its relative weaknesses, the capacity to improve further is good. Governors play an effective part in supporting the school, using their range of expertise and experience. They are actively involved in observing the work of the school, although the part they play in vigorously testing the school's view of itself could be more demanding.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils We really enjoyed the time spent with you during the recent inspection. Many thanks to all of you for making us so welcome, and special thanks to those pupils who took time out to talk with one of us about their views of your school. We think you have a good school and there is a lot happening that we see as really special. For example, we were very pleased to see so many happy pupils enjoying lessons and getting along so well with each other. The staff have worked wonders in looking after you to help make all this possible. All of the staff, especially your teachers and their assistants work hard and have a lot to be thanked for in helping you achieve so much. The work you do in lessons and your results have impressed us and some of what you have achieved is really exceptional. We think more of what you achieve can be as exceptional. We have asked your headteacher and the school's governors to look more closely at the success of their work and your results in order for you to achieve the very best. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are doing a good job ensuring your school is successful. Many thanks for all of your help. Yours sincerely